

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	: William N. Youstra	Art Unit	: 2157
Serial No.	: 09/867,797	Examiner	: Avi M. Gold
Filed	: May 31, 2001	Conf. No.	: 6602
Title	: AUTHENTICATION OF ELECTRONIC DATA		

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

SECOND REVISED BRIEF ON APPEAL

(1) Real Party in Interest

AOL LLC, the assignee of this application, is the real party in interest.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interferences.

(3) Status of Claims

Claims 1-52 are pending, of which claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 are independent. Claims 1-52 have been rejected. In particular, claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,393,465 ("Leeds") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,766,352 ("McBrearty") in a final Office Action mailed August 24, 2006 ("final Office Action"). Additionally, claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-17, 22, 23, 26, 27-31, 36, 37, and 40-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,156 ("Drummond"); claims 4 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leeds and Drummond further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,438,597 ("Mosberger"); claims 18 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty further in view of U.S. Patent 6,714,982 ("McDonough"); and claims 21, 24, 35, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,104,990 ("Chaney").

A Notice of Appeal and a Pre-Appeal Brief Request for Review were filed on November 22, 2006. A Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review mailed on February 26, 2007 maintained the rejections of claims 1-52.

A Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief mailed on May 16, 2007 indicated that the brief filed on March 26, 2007 did not contain a statement of the status of all claims or did not identify the appealed claims. Appellant submitted a revised brief on June 18, 2007. Appellant submits that the sections "Status of the Claims" and "Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal" included in the Revised Appeal Brief satisfied the issues raised in the Notification of May 16, 2007. A second Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief was mailed on September 5, 2007 indicating that the revised brief filed on June 18, 2007 did not include a concise explanation of the subject matter defined in each of the independent claims involved in the appeal. Appellant submits that the section "Summary of Claimed Subject Matter" included in this Second Revised Appeal Brief satisfy the issues raised in the Notification of September 5, 2007.

(4) Status of Amendments

Claims 1-52 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 being independent. Claims 1-52 have not been amended after the final Office Action. Thus, all amendments have been entered. The claims are copied in Appendix A.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The claimed subject matter is directed to transmitting and receiving electronic data. The following summarizes each independent claim with reference to the application and drawings.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method for transmitting electronic data. See, e.g., application at page 17, lines 3-4. In one particular example, a communications system host receives electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient. See, e.g., application at page 17, line 21 and Fig. 7 (710). The electronic data is endorsed based on attributes of the electronic data. See, e.g., application at page 17, lines 26-31. The electronic data is modified with endorsement information so that the presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at

page 15-29 and Fig. 8A (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820). See also application at page 19, line 30 to page 20, line 7 and Figs. 9A and 9B (compare the distinguishable border 910A with the standard border 910B).

Independent claim 19 is directed to an apparatus for transmitting electronic data. See, e.g., application at page 17, lines 3-5. The apparatus includes a host (see, e.g., application at page 7, lines 10-12 and FIG. 7, element 740) configured to receive, at a communications host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient (see, e.g., page 17, lines 15-25 and FIG. 7, elements 705 and 710). The electronic data is endorsed based on attributes of the electronic data. See, e.g., application at page 17, lines 26-31. The electronic data is modified with endorsement information so that the presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at page 18, lines 12-13 and application at page 15-29 and Fig. 8A (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820). See also application at page 19, line 30 to page 20, line 7 and Figs. 9A and 9B (compare the distinguishable border 910A with the standard border 910B).

Independent claim 20 is directed to a computer program, stored on a computer readable medium. See, e.g., application at page 2, lines 23-25. See also application at page 17, lines 3-6. The computer program includes instructions for receiving, at a communications host, electronic data from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient (see, e.g., page 17, lines 15-25 and FIG. 7, elements 705 and 710). The computer program also includes instructions for endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data. See, e.g., application at page 17, lines 26-31. The computer program also includes instructions for modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at page 18, lines 12-13 and application at page 15-29 and Fig. 8A (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820). See also application at page 19, line 30 to page 20, line 7 and Figs. 9A and 9B (compare the distinguishable border 910A with the standard border 910B).

Independent claim 25 is directed to a method for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system (see, e.g., application at page 17, lines 3-6 and application at FIG. 6, element 600), the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data (see, e.g., application at page 17,

line 26 to page 18, line 6). Information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed is received from a communications system host. See, e.g., application at page 18, line 31 to page 19, line 1. Information is rendered to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at page 19, lines 15-22 and Fig. 8 (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820).

Independent claim 33 is directed to an apparatus for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system (see, e.g., application at page 17, lines 3-6 and application at FIG. 6, element 600), the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data (see, e.g., application at page 17, line 26 to page 18, line 6). Information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed is received from a communications system host. See, e.g., application at page 18, line 31 to page 19, line 1. Information is rendered to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at page 19, lines 15-22 and Fig. 8 (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820).

Independent claim 34 is directed toward a computer program stored on a computer-readable medium. See, e.g., application at page 2, lines 23-25. The computer program includes instructions for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system (see, e.g., application at page 17, lines 3-6 and application at FIG. 6, element 600), the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data (see, e.g., application at page 17, line 26 to page 18, line 6). Information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed is received from a communications system host. See, e.g., application at page 18, line 31 to page 19, line 1. Information is rendered to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at page 19, lines 15-22 and Fig. 8 (compare the first icon 815 with the second icon 820).

Independent claim 39 is directed toward a graphical user interface for rendering information associated with electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient. See, e.g., application at Fig. 8 (showing the UI 800 and the "New Mail" folder 810 for displaying attributes of received messages). The graphical user interface renders the endorsement information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed. See, e.g., application at Fig. 8. The graphical user interface includes a border indicative of endorsement around contents of the electronic data so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages. See, e.g., application at Figs. 9A and 9B (compare the "Unofficial Mail" template 905B having a standard border 910B with the "Official AOL Mail" template 905B having a distinguishable border 910A).

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

a. Claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,393,465 ("Leeds") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,766,352 ("McBrearty").

b. Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-17, 22, 23, 26, 27-31, 36, 37, and 40-45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-17, 22, 23, 26, 27-31, 36, 37, and 40-45 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds in view of McBrearty and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,156 ("Drummond").

c. Claims 4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds and Drummond and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,438,597 ("Mosberger").

d. Claims 18 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 18 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,714,982 ("McDonough").

e. Claims 21, 24, 35, and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 21, 24, 35, and 38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,104,990 ("Chaney").

(7) Argument

a. Claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39 are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds in view of McBrearty

Appellant requests reversal of this rejection because neither Leeds, McBrearty, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests the subject matter of independent claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 33, 34, and 39. In particular, neither Leeds, McBrearty, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests "modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages," as recited by independent claims 1, 19, and 20. Similarly, neither Leeds, McBrearty, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests "rendering the information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages," as recited by independent claims 25, 33, and 34, or "presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages," as recited by independent claim 39.

Neither Leeds nor McBrearty suggest visually distinguishing endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages

Leeds is directed to a spam filtering system. As noted in the abstract, Leeds uses a scoring system to determine whether incoming e-mail can be deleted. See Leeds at Fig. 6b (a rating is assigned a message and used to process the message); see also Leeds at col. 4, lines 55-60 (a score of 100 can be used to trigger automatic deletion of a message). The scoring system in Leeds performs analytical operations before the user perceives a message. Moreover, Leeds does not describe how a message is presented to a user nor how presentation of a message is based on the message-processing operations that are performed. As such, Leeds does not describe or suggest “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages,” as recited by claim 1.

Realizing this deficiency of Leeds, the final Office Action relies on McBrearty to show “presentation of the electronic data that visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages,” Appellant respectfully disagrees for the reasons discussed below.

Like Leeds, McBrearty fails to describe or suggest “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages,” as recited by claim 1. Rather, McBrearty relates to techniques for displaying files requested by a user on a client system and identifying whether the file is a cached file or a newly downloaded file. See McBrearty at Abstract and col. 1, lines 16-20. The requested file is displayed to the user in a graphical user interface along with an indicator that informs the user of whether the file is a cached file. See McBrearty at col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, lines 2. However, the indicator of whether the file is cached locally is not an indicator of endorsement. Thus, rather than teaching endorsement such that endorsed messages are visually distinguished from nonendorsed messages, McBrearty's indicator merely shows whether a file is cached locally on the client. Notably, McBrearty does not describe or suggest “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages,” as recited by claim 1.

Accordingly, neither Leeds nor McBrearty describes or suggests “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages,” as recited by claim 1. Because neither of these references shows this feature, no proper combination of these references shows this feature. As such, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection.

Modification of Leeds with McBrearty would not have been obvious because the proposed modification renders Leeds unsatisfactory for its intended purpose and makes no common sense

As discussed above, the final Office Action concedes that Leeds fails to describe or suggest “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.” For this feature, the final Office Action relies on McBrearty suggesting that it would have been obvious to modify Leeds with the teachings of McBrearty. Specifically, the final Office Action argues that one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify Leeds with McBrearty “because it is a way of visually confirming endorsement without the user needing to read any text.” However, as described below, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify Leeds with McBrearty in the manner suggested in the final Office Action.

The proposed modification of Leeds with McBrearty would not have been an obvious modification because, for the reasons indicated below, the suggested modification would render Leeds unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. See MPEP § 2143.01(V)(A proposed modification of the prior art that renders it unsatisfactory for its intended purpose is not an obvious modification.). Thus, it makes no common sense to modify Leeds with McBrearty.

As described above, Leeds is directed towards a spam filtering system and relates to techniques to provide “enhanced blocking of junk email.” See Leeds at col. 2, lines 10-13. In particular, Leeds’ techniques involve determining whether an email is a junk email (or spam), and removing the junk email from a user’s inbox before the intended recipient reviews their inbox, so as to relieve the intended recipient of the burden of having to even perceive the receipt of junk email. See Leeds at col. 6, lines 25-34; Fig. 6b (showing steps 238 and 248 that “file mail based on confidence rating rules”); col. 8, lines 4-9. See also Leeds at Fig. 4 (showing that

a message is marked as a suspected junk e-mail and routed "to trash or junk e-mail suspect holding location").

Thus, Leeds's techniques relieves the intended recipient from the burden of perceiving emails that are deemed to be spam. This is directly contrary to the techniques disclosed by McBrearty, which suggest displaying all content to the intended recipient, and merely distinguishing that which has been derived from cache. Indeed, by combining the McBrearty teachings with the Leeds teachings would destroy the teachings of Leeds, as such a combination (putting aside Appellant's point that a reflection of whether a file is cached is not a reflection of whether that file has been endorsed) would result in the Leeds recipient reviewing messages otherwise filtered from their inbox. As such, there would have been no motivation to modify Leeds with McBrearty in order to provide "a way of visually confirming endorsement without the user having to read any text," as argued by the final Office Action. There would have been no motivation to modify Leeds with the teachings of McBrearty, and the modification of Leeds with McBrearty makes no common sense.

The Advisory Action notes that Leeds and McBrearty are analogous art because "they are both centered on electronic data." See Advisory Action of Nov. 13, 2006 at page 2. Appellant respectfully notes that, regardless of whether Leeds and McBrearty are analogous art, it makes no common sense to combine these references for the reasons discussed above.

Because it would not have been obvious to modify Leeds with the teachings of McBrearty, Appellant respectfully requests reversal of the rejection of claim 1, and claims 2-18 and 40-46, which depend from claim 1.

Claims 19-39 recite subject matter similar to that discussed above for the purpose of the rejection raised with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, Appellant respectfully requests reversal of the rejection of independent claims 19, 20, 25, 29, 33, 34, and 39, along with claims 21-24, 26-28, 30-32, 35-38, and 47-52, which respectively depend from these independent claims.

b. Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-17, 22, 23, 26, 27-31, 36, 37, and 40-45 are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds in view of McBrearty and further in view of Drummond

As claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-17, 22, 23, 26, 27-31, 36, 37, and 40-45 depend from one of independent claims 1, 19, 20, 25, 29, 33, 34, and 39, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection for at least the reasons described above with respect to the independent claims. Moreover, neither Leeds, McBrearty, Drummond, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.” Specifically, Drummond does not make up for the deficiencies of Leeds in view of McBrearty, nor does the final Office Action contend that Drummond does so.

For at least these reasons, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection.

c. Claims 4 and 8 are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds in view of Drummon and further in view of Mosberger.

As claims 4 and 8 depend from independent claim 1, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 1. Additionally, neither Leeds, McBrearty, Mosberger, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.” In particular, Mosberger does not make up for the deficiencies of Leeds in view of McBrearty, nor does the final Office Action contend that Mosberger does so.

For at least these reasons, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection.

d. Claims 18 and 32 are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty further in view of McDonough.

As claims 18 and 32 depend from independent claims 1 and 25, respectively, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to these independent claims. Furthermore, neither Leeds, McBrearty, McDonough, nor any proper

combination of these references describes or suggests “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.” In particular, McDonough does not make up for the deficiencies of Leeds and McBrearty, nor does the final Office Action contend that McDonough does so.

For at least these reasons, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection.

e. Claims 21, 24, 35, and 38 are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Leeds and McBrearty and further in view of Chaney

As claims 21, 24, 35, and 38 depend from claims 1 and 34, respectively, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection for at least the reasons described above with respect to the independent claims. Moreover, neither Leeds, McBrearty, Chaney, nor any proper combination of these references describes or suggests “modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.” In particular, Chaney does not remedy the failure of Leeds and McBrearty to describe or suggest the subject matter of the independent claims, nor does the final Office Action contend that Chaney does so.

For at least these reasons, Appellant requests reversal of this rejection.

f. Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, the rejections should be reversed.

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In view of the fee of \$500 submitted on March 26, 2007, no fee is believed due.
Nonetheless, please apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 5, 2007



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Appendix of Claims

1. (Previously presented) A method for transmitting electronic data, the method comprising:
 - receiving, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;
 - endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and
 - modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein endorsing comprises identifying the sender of the electronic data.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the sender is identified by a screen name.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the sender is identified by an IP address.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein endorsing further comprises designating a level of security corresponding to the sender of the electronic data.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein endorsing further comprises verifying that at least one attribute of the electronic data is an attribute of an authorized sender.
7. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the attribute comprises a screen name.
8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the attribute comprises an IP address.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein endorsing further comprises designating a level of security corresponding to at least one attribute of the electronic data.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
storing content of the electronic data in a first storage area of the communications system host; and
storing attributes of the electronic data in a second storage area of the communications system host.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the endorsement information to the intended recipient.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the endorsed information is presented with the attributes of the electronic data.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed information is presented with the content of the electronic data.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed information is capable of being rendered by the intended recipient as an icon indicative of endorsement.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed information is capable of being rendered by the intended recipient as a graphical user interface indicative of endorsement.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the graphical user interface includes a border indicative of endorsement around contents of the electronic data.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic data comprises an e-mail message.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic data comprises an instant message.

19. (Previously presented) An apparatus for transmitting electronic data, the apparatus comprising a host configured to:

receive, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;

endorse the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and

modify the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

20. (Previously presented) A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, comprising instructions for:

receiving, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;

endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and

modifying the electronic data with endorsement information so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

21. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a disc.

22. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a client device.

23. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a host device.

24. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a propagated signal.

25. (Previously presented) A method for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data, the method comprising:
receiving, from a communications system host, information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed; and

rendering the information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered by the intended recipient as an icon indicative of endorsement.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered by the intended recipient as a graphical user interface indicative of endorsement.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the graphical user interface includes a border indicative of endorsement around contents of the electronic data.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered with contents of the electronic data.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsed information is rendered with attributes of the electronic data.

31. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the electronic data comprises an e-mail message.

32. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the electronic data comprises an instant message.

33. (Previously presented) An apparatus for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data, the apparatus comprising a client configured to:

receive, from a communications system host, endorsement information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed; and

render the endorsement information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

34. (Previously presented) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of electronic data, the computer program comprising instructions for:

receiving, from a communications system host, endorsement information indicating that the electronic data has been endorsed; and

rendering the information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed so that rendering the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

35. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a disc.

36. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a client device.

37. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a host device.

38. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a propagated signal.

39. (Previously presented) A graphical user interface for rendering information associated with electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient, the graphical user interface rendering the endorsement information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been endorsed, the graphical user interface comprising a border indicative of endorsement around contents of the electronic data so that presentation of the electronic data visually distinguishes endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes enabling a messaging application to visually distinguish the endorsed messages from the nonendorsed messages.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40 wherein enabling the messaging application to visually distinguish between the endorsed and nonendorsed messages includes presenting an endorsed icon for an endorsed electronic mail message in an electronic mail inbox that also includes nonendorsed electronic mail messages.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40 wherein enabling the messaging application to visually distinguish between the endorsed and nonendorsed messages includes presenting an endorsed envelope, an endorsed seal, or an endorsed border for an endorsed electronic mail message that is differentiated from other envelopes, seals, or borders used in nonendorsed electronic mail messages.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes appending endorsement information to originally-received electronic data.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes instructing a rendering application that the electronic data represents endorsed communications.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data with endorsement information includes configuring a messaging communication to reflect endorsement by a messaging provider.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

47. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein modifying the electronic data includes displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

48. (Previously presented). The computer program of claim 20 wherein modifying the electronic data includes displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein rendering the information includes displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

50. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the client is configured to displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

51. (Previously presented) The computer program of claim 34 wherein rendering the information includes displaying both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

52. (Previously presented) The graphical user interface of claim 39 wherein the graphical user interface is structured and arranged to display both the endorsed messages and the nonendorsed messages in a single display concurrently.

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Evidence Appendix

None.

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Related Proceedings Appendix

None.